

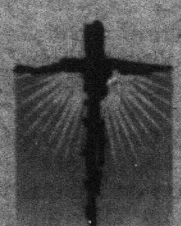
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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Missions history rides with astronaut

HOUSTON (BP) — Astronaut Patrick Forrester, a specialist on the space shuttle Discovery crew that is in orbit now, is carrying with him a piece of the battery box from martyred missionary pilot Nate Saint's Piper PA-14 airplane.

Forrester, a deacon at University Church in Houston, has been interested in the work of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and wrote to them to see if they had anything he could take on the flight launching on Aug. 29.

"Sometimes the astronauts carry small pieces of something," Forrester's pastor, Robert Creech, said. "He thought he might get a patch or a certificate or something, and he was very excited when he found out it was a part of the airplane."

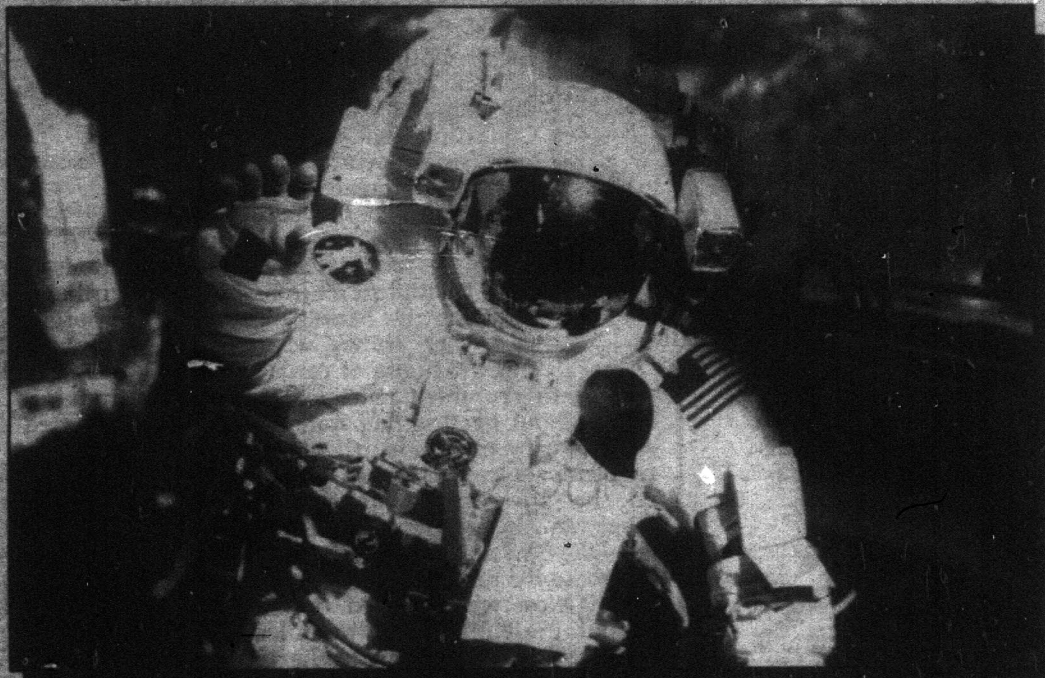
Saint was among five missionaries to Ecuador who were murdered on a sandbar in 1956 by a tribe of Waodani Indians.

This is the third shuttle flight for Forrester, 52, a retired Army colonel and aviator who has been an astronaut since 1996. He performed spacewalks on his first two missions, in 2001 and 2007, and this time he is supervising the spacewalks from inside the shuttle.

When the 13-day mission to the international space station is complete, Forrester will return the plane part to Mission Aviation Fellowship along with a certificate confirming its presence on Discovery's flight. MAF plans to display the part and the certificate at its headquarters in Nampa, Id.

"Bringing attention to and renewing interest in missions would be a great result of this experience," Forrester told MAF. "My deepest intent is to honor Nate Saint, the Saint family and all missionaries around the world."

Founded in 1945, Mission Aviation Fellowship teams serve in 55 countries, transporting missionaries, medical person-



HIGH ABOVE — In this file photo from 2001, astronaut Patrick Forrester waves at a crew member inside Discovery's cabin during one of two spacewalks he performed on a shuttle mission. During his current mission on the space shuttle Discovery, Forrester carried a piece of martyred Christian missionary Nate Saint's Piper PA-14 airplane to the international space station. (BP photo courtesy of National Aeronautics and Space Administration)

nel, medicines, and relief supplies into remote areas. They also provide telecommunications services, such as satellite Internet access, high-frequency radios, e-mail, and other wireless systems for missionaries.

Creech, who has known Forrester about 15 years, told Baptist Press the astronaut is a favorite Sunday School teacher among University Church's high school students.

"He's one of my heroes. He's an incredible person," Creech said. "He has a servant's heart, and when we've gone to Africa he's tried to conceal his identity. He doesn't go around being an astronaut. He's just Patrick."

Last year, Forrester went Uganda on his first mission trip. He spent a week with about 30 pastors from across Uganda, training them and developing relationships.

At the end of the week, the International Mission Board (IMB) worker there asked Forrester to tell the pastors about his work with NASA. The next day, he asked one of the pastors whether he slept well that night. The man, named Joseph, said he did not. Instead, he lay awake all night looking at the sky, pondering the photographs of earth from space that he had seen in Forrester's presentation.

Until then, Joseph had not known the earth was round, and he stayed awake marveling at the vastness of God.

"I had seen that with my own eyes and yet I did not see the enormity of God the way that Joseph did just by looking at those pictures," the astronaut recounted. "I thought, 'Where else am I walking around day to day and missing the enormity of God just in what He has placed before me?'"

Forrester planned to return to Uganda the following summer, but shuttle launch delays prevented him from going on the trip. Instead, he was in space the week the University Church group went to Africa.

Joseph had given Forrester a picture of his family standing in front of their tent on his visit to Uganda, and he took it into orbit with him on that mission. Forrester had a crewmate take a picture of him holding the photograph with the earth in the distance, and he e-mailed it to the IMB worker in Uganda.

The missionary printed the picture and gave it to Joseph.

"A year ago this man did not know the earth was round, and he's holding a picture of his family as it floats in space," Forrester said.

God used the experience with Joseph to show Forrester that his accomplishments as an astronaut are tools for Kingdom purposes. "God spoke very clearly to me that day and said, 'I want you to use the things that I've given you, the person that I've made you. I'll work through those. I don't want you to look at gifts that I've given to other people, for you to want those,'" Forrester said.

Creech said Forrester and his wife, a neonatal nurse, are considering a transition to full-time missionary service.

"When I visualize what I might do after I end my career at NASA, always in the back of my mind is going into the mission field in some way," Forrester was quoted as saying in Mission Aviation Fellowship news release.

"If I could go tomorrow and be a pilot with an organization like MAF, I think that's what I'd do."



MARTYRED SAINT — In this 1955 photo, Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot Nate Saint shows gifts he received from Waodani Indians of Ecuador. Saint was martyred the next year while in the service of Christian missions. Astronaut Patrick Forrester carried a piece of Saint's Piper PA-14 airplane to the international space station in his current mission aboard space shuttle Discovery. (BP photo)



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Tragedy as commonplace

Janice Singleton of Jackson had the world on a string. The first in her family to earn a college degree, the ambitious young woman opened a tax preparation business at the age of 22. She worked other jobs, too, to get ahead. She became a role model in the minority community from which she sprang.

The story of how she came to stand before a federal judge in Jackson last Friday as a convicted felon is, sadly, becoming tragically commonplace in our state.

Singleton pled guilty on Friday to fraud and was sentenced to four years and four months in prison. Prosecutors say that while she working one of those other jobs she held, as an employee of the Mississippi Department of Corrections, she stole the names and Social Security numbers of state prison inmates and used the information to file false federal and state income tax returns. When the refunds came in from those fraudulent returns, she kept the money for herself.

As her artifice was exposed and the house of cards she built started to crumble, questions were also raised about her tax preparation business. According to some of her clients, there were problems there, too. The Secret Service raided the business in January 2007, and Singleton allegedly assaulted a television crew the next month when they came to ask her about the raid.

Singleton was indicted on 20 counts, including identity theft, fraudulent use of identity, fraud by mail or other means of communication, and fraudulent statements. Prosecutors believe she stole the identities of at least 50 state prison inmates while in the employ of the

"WELL, I'LL PUT IT THIS WAY—CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS HAVE NOT BEEN THE SAME. YOU WERE A FINANCE CHAIRMAN LIKE NONE WE'VE EVER SEEN!"



Mississippi Department of Corrections, to further her scheme. It is not clear from news reports whether any irregularities at the tax preparation business can be proven.

As Singleton begged for mercy last Friday from U.S. District Judge Henry Wingate, she admitted that a gambling problem had led her into a life of betrayal and crime. Her attorney, Buddy Coxwell, verified her story. Wingate, apparently unmoved, issued the prison sentence and also ordered her to pay the Internal Revenue Service and the Mississippi Tax Commission more than \$240,000 in restitution.

According to news reports, Singleton still faces state charges in Rankin County where she worked for the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

The culture in our state today takes little note of individuals whose lives are

wrecked by legalized gambling. As our governor and legislators have indicated over and over, by both word and deed, the money brought in by legalized gambling is just too sweet to care about the individuals and families destroyed in the process — but what of the many other innocent victims of the many other schemes to steal money for legalized gambling?

While it's normally difficult to sympathize with prison inmates, we should take into account that Singleton took advantage of a group of people who were vulnerable and helpless to protect themselves from her. As if they don't have enough problems, they will now be released back into society when their sentences are served with one more complication: identity theft. There could also be additional victims if Singleton's scheme carried over into the tax preparation business.

Then there's the odd situation of the government — that's us, by the way — legalizing the very activity that led to the government punishing Singleton so severely. The government offers the temptation and then penalizes people for taking advantage of the temptation. The government promotes the addiction and then slaps people down when they go too far.

Does this make sense? That's a good question to ask the politicians who got us into this mess. Don't accept the platitudes and dodgy answers for which they are so famous these days. When they next want your vote, let them know your support hinges on their position on legalized gambling. They work for us, after all, even if some of them believe the opposite is true.

As long as we excuse legalized gambling and allow its corruption to flourish at such great cost, there will be many more Janice Singletons in our future. The next tragedy could be your father or mother, son or daughter. Think about it.

It's right there in James 1:27a: "Pure and undefiled religion is this: to look after... widows in their distress..." Need some fresh ideas for demonstrating pure religion by ministering to widows in your church?

Share a tissue

Small acts of Christian kindness can make a difference during grief. For a new widow, make a notation on your personal calendar to remember the one-month anniversary of the death for 12 months. Personally contact her monthly with a simple phone call, a visit, an encouragement note, an invitation to dinner, or an invitation for a cup of coffee.

Notice her. Seek her out at church. Talk with her. Show love. Sit by her during worship. If she's not there, call to check on her.

Listen. Don't avoid conversation about her husband. Whether she is a recent widow or has been alone for decades, let her share memories of her husband.

Pray. Every time God brings her to mind, pray. Take the time to voice a prayer when you visit.

Offer friendship

Demonstrate God's love through friendship (Proverbs 17:17). Be a friend. Laugh



GUEST OPINION:

Help the widows

By Diana Davis
Indianapolis

together. Cry together. Shop together. Carpool. Telephone. Text. Begin a new tradition with her by inviting her for a holiday, calling her each Sunday afternoon, planting flower bulbs each fall or taking her to lunch on her birthday.

Include her. Help her meet Christians with similar interests or life circumstances. Include widows on your guest list when you entertain.

Think of the kids. When your ministry involves younger widows, be aware of her need for childcare to be provided. Consider adopting a young family that first Christmas after the death, helping out with the purchase of presents.

Show honor

1 Timothy 5:3-10 instructs us

to honor widows who are widows indeed. Personally deliver a holiday fruit basket, a birthday balloon, or a single Gerber daisy.

Some churches honor widows annually during a worship service. Mail widows a printed invitation, make them special nametags, and give them a corsage as they arrive. Create a pre-service slideshow to spotlight them. Ask them to stand, and invite church members to surround them and offer a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing.

Don't overlook her value in ministry. A widow is a part of the church body, and her ministry is valuable. She may have more time than at other stages of life, so include her as a prayer warrior, volunteer, committee member, etc.

Get practical

Deuteronomy 24:19 encourages practical assistance to widows. Some churches assign widows to a deacon and his wife or a church member for regular contact and help with physical, spiritual, and social needs. Some churches have a list of widows, and encourage church groups to adopt and give special attention to one.

When scheduling a visit to her home, mention that you'd love to spend a few minutes and replace smoke alarm batteries, sew on a button, or something she can't easily do for herself. Think of routine responsibilities that husbands often handle such as car maintenance, and offer to take her car to get the oil changed or tires rotated. Even the things she might have routinely done are often forgotten in the months following a death.

The care and treatment of widows must be important to God. It's addressed in more than 20 Scriptures. How will you demonstrate your pure religion today?

Davis, author of *Deacon Wives*, is married to Stephen Davis, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. This article first appeared in the Southern Baptist Texan, online at texanonline.net.

Obama stem cell guidelines lead to lawsuit

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Obama administration's guidelines for federal funding of stem cell research that results in the destruction of human embryos have been challenged in court, and a lawyer behind the suit says he thinks its "chances are very good."

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) decision to fund embryonic stem cell research is "unethical, scientifically unnecessary, fiscally irresponsible and counterproductive," opponents said in their complaint filed August 19 in District of Columbia federal court.

Their suit contends the guidelines violate a 13-year-old congressional ban on funds for research that destroys embryos. It also says NIH failed to follow procedures required by law before issuing the guidelines, including in its dismissal of substantial studies that show other stem cells are "ethically and medically superior alternatives."

According to NIH's interpretation of the congressional ban, federal funds can be used for embryonic stem cell research as long as the embryos themselves are destroyed using private sector money.

Federal judge Royce Lamberth, who was nominated by President Ronald Reagan, has been assigned to the case. The parties filing the lawsuit are hopeful a hearing will be conducted in mid-October to consider their

request for a preliminary injunction that would block embryonic stem cell research funding.

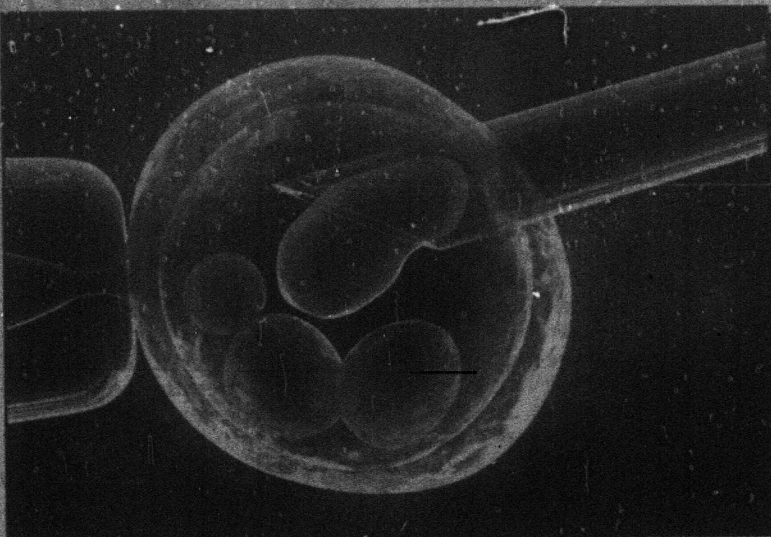
The Obama administration has not requested a dismissal of the case, but it "is going to fight us tooth and nail," said Samuel Casey, a lawyer for the plaintiffs and general counsel of Advocates International's Law of Life Task Force who expressed optimism about the suit's chances.

"The humanity of the human embryo is the civil rights movement of the 21st century," Casey told Baptist Press Aug. 28.

"If we tell the world that the human embryo is not a member of our species, you cannot overestimate the hurt that is going to put on humanity... If we let the wall down here, we'll never be able to erect it again," he said.

Among the plaintiffs in the case are the Christian Medical Association; Nightlight Christian Adoptions (the California-based agency that is known for its "snowflakes" embryo adoption program); two researchers who work with adult stem cells and not embryonic ones; and two sets of parents who have adopted and seek to adopt more embryos.

NIH issued guidelines July 7 in response to President Obama's March executive order overturning a ban on grants for embryonic stem cell research and his directive for the agency to provide rules for embryonic stem cell research funding within 120 days.



Obama's order rescinded a policy instituted by President Bush in August 2001. Bush's rule barred the use of federal funds for stem cell research that results in the destruction of human embryos. Bush permitted, however, grants for experiments on stem cell lines, or colonies, already in existence.

Because of their ability to develop into other cells and tissues, stem cells provide hope for producing cures for a variety of diseases. Though embryonic stem cells have been promoted for their pluripotency — they theoretically can transform into any cell or tissue — extracting them destroys the embryo.

NIH's new guidelines limit federal funds to research involving embryos produced by, in vitro fertilization (IVF) for reproductive purposes and donated by couples who no longer want them. The couples must provide voluntary, written permission.

The plaintiffs in the suit contend the guidelines violate the 1996 Dickey-Wicker Amendment, a rider to the spending bill for the Department of Health and Human Services. The amendment prohibits federal funds for "(1) the creation of a human embryo or embryos for research purposes; or (2) research in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed, discarded, or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death greater than that allowed for research on fetuses in utero..."

The amendment, the suit argues, "evinces a clear congressional intent to prohibit federal funding for research

that is dependent on harming or destroying human embryos. Because the process by which human embryonic stem cells are extracted from human embryos necessarily destroys the embryos, the Federal Funding Ban expressly prohibits federal funding of human embryonic stem cell research."

In a written statement when the suit was filed, Thomas Hurger, another lawyer for the plaintiffs, said the "language of the statute is clear. It bans public funding for any research that leads to the destruction of human embryos. NIH's attempt to avoid Congress' command by funding everything but the act of 'harvesting' is pure sophistry."

Congress has approved Dickey-Wicker, named after its sponsors, former Republican Reps. Jay Dickey of Arkansas and Roger Wicker of Mississippi, every year since 1996. Most recently, Obama in March signed legislation that includes the amendment into law.

The suit also says NIH failed to take into account the scientific and ethical superiority of research using adult stem cells and induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells. Such cells make the funding of destructive embryonic research unnecessary, they contend.

Trials using adult stem cells have produced therapies for at least 73 ailments in human beings, despite the fact such cells are not considered pluripotent, according to Do No Harm, a coalition promoting ethics in research.

Vote may be near

OLYMPIA, Wash. (BP) — An effort to overturn Washington state's same-sex domestic partnerships law is on pace to qualify for the ballot, with the next several days determining its fate. Referendum 71, as it is called, would go on the November ballot and reverse a law that grants homosexual couples all the legal benefits of marriage, minus the name. Supporters submitted 137,689 signatures July 25 and have been waiting since then to see if they met the threshold of 120,577 valid signatures. So far, they're OK, but barely. Through Wednesday's count by the Washington secretary of state's office, 103,198 signatures had been declared valid and 13,871 invalid, which comes to an 11.85% rejection rate. For the proposal to qualify, the rejection rate must stay at or below 12.4%. Signatures are rejected for a number of reasons, such as the person not living in the state or having signed the petition twice. Including Washington, five states have so-called "everything but marriage" laws for homosexual couples. Washington, though, would be the first one to put the issue on the ballot. Washington state Democratic Gov. Christine Gregoire signed the same sex bill into law in May, waiting as long as she could to give bill opponents less time to gather signatures for the referendum. That delay, the Seattle Times reported, eliminated about one-third of the 90 days supporters had to gather signatures. "While the signature count is still considered 'too close to call' by the Secretary of State, we are holding onto a pace that will exceed the 120,577 required signatures," a statement on the Protect Marriage Washington website reads. "My friends, we are very, very close to declaring a victory for this phase one of the R-71 campaign!" Domestic partnerships and civil union laws often are promoted as a "middle of the road" approach, but opponents argue that they simply are stepping stones to same sex marriage, as has been shown to be the case in Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire, three states that formerly had similar laws but now recognize same sex marriage. For more information about Referendum 71, visit ProtectMarriageWa.com.

Looking back

10 years ago

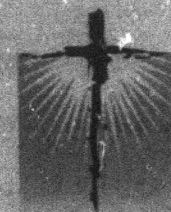
Southern Baptists set up two field kitchens to minister to Turkish survivors of an Aug. 17 earthquake that killed at least 14,000 people and left 600,000 people homeless.

20 years ago

The Mississippi Association for the Deaf names Mignonne Tadlock of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, Patron of the Year. Tadlock is director of the youth department of the deaf at Broadmoor Church, and also serves as a freelance interpreter for the deaf.

30 years ago

Northside Church, Jackson, dedicates their first three stained glass windows and a set of Holland made handbells Aug. 23. Henry Crouch, pastor.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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BEF UICXIIJOW XE DI
NWBCC EIIT FXI, UICX-
IINO OWSK OWXN?
YSWE ICIIIE: OHIEOL-
NXQ

Clue: J=V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Acts Thirteen: Thirty-Nine

THE WONDER OF WORK

Some wise old sage has rightly said that if you can find a job that you enjoy doing, you will never have to work a day in your life. There is a large measure of truth in that statement, and what is even more interesting is to watch and pick out the people who are enjoying their work. As a rule, they are making a difference, and they are making a difference in the people with whom they work or with whom they serve. It is possibly even more significant to see the folks who do not enjoy what they are doing, for not only do they poison a lot of the atmosphere around them, they can poison the spirits of the people with whom they work and sour the attitudes of folks they are serving. As a general rule, they are easier to pick out than the people who do enjoy their work.

Ken Blanchard was a successful, tenured professor at a university before he became a well-known author and speaker. His book, *The One Minute Manager*, not only topped the sales charts years ago, but it catapulted him to fame and an ever-growing fortune. Years ago, some friends of his encouraged him to start his own company. He never really intended to do that or thought about doing that. They offered to give him some encouragement, guidance, and support if he would do so.

The first thing he and his wife had to do was to decide on a business plan. After much thought, they arrived at three basic things:

- Work with people that they liked.
- Do things that would make a difference in the world.
- Have fun.

When the folks who were encouraging him to go into business saw his business plan, they did not think that it was a very wise approach. There was nothing in the plan about money, profits, or the things with which most businesses begin and toward which the bottom line is focused. Blanchard's friends tried to broaden his understanding, to refocus his thinking, and to help him understand that either a business makes money or it is not going to be in business long.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

However, after many years of guiding a company and expanding that company, Blanchard's principles remain intact. Think about these simple, transforming realities in your own life.

The first one is relational. Work with people you like. There may be certain skill sets that are required for someone to work in a place. While a person may have the ability, their personality, demeanor, and attitude is not something that is enjoyable. On the other hand, some folks are just a delight to be around but they do not have the needed skills.

The other problem that often arises is the fact that just like in any other relationship, whether it is with friends at school or your husband or wife, there are times when even the people you enjoy are not enjoyable to be around. They may disappoint you. They may differ from you. They may have internal issues that make their life different and difficult, and during those times either you can opt out of the relationship or you can opt to get through the difficult periods. As with any relationship, working with people that you like is a matter of determining that you want to like them and you want to work with them. It is a principle that maybe sounds good but will need work.

The second part of Blanchard's business plan is also interesting — to make a difference in the world and to do something that will actually help people's lives, encourage them, lift them up, put them on a new path, open new doors, and help them to have new resources. Oftentimes people lose sight of the great impact that they are having on those around them.

Schoolteachers invest their time and energy, work hard for low pay, and never ever get a thank you note. Medical professionals who bring such help and hope to people often lose sight or may not realize the great blessing they are to others. Everyone needs a purpose for being and a purpose for living, but at times because of the routineness of our work and the fact that we get so little feedback, we wonder if we are doing any good.

The third of Blanchard's principles was to have fun. The strange thing about having fun and achieving happiness is that when those are your goals, it does not seem possible to reach them. It seems to me that happiness and even fun in life are byproducts of other things. If you just wake up in the morning and say, "Today I'm going out and having fun," it may or may not happen. However, if you get up and quietly go about your day helping others and are sensitive to those that live around you and the burdens they carry, at the end of the day you begin to realize that one of the rewards of that work cycle was joy, fun, and even happiness.

Through the years, I have watched the folks who go on disaster teams with friends and sometime total strangers. They are loading up goods, chainsaws, or whatever is needed and charging into a devastated area filled with people whose lives have been wrecked. They may stay up more hours, put in more hard work, and feel more exhausted than they ever have, and yet there is a delight and a joy that comes to their lives that cannot be experienced in any other way. On the other hand, if you told somebody, "Pick up a heavy chainsaw and let's go into

this tornado-ravaged area. We're going to spend 12-14 hours a day working harder than we have probably worked in years. It's going to be fun," few people would believe it, but it is true.

Our Lord gives us some instructions about work that can help us through our daily experiences. He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Jesus points out to us that we need to do the task before us because it is the right thing.

I think He would also want us to understand clearly that all tasks in life are not easy, not fun, and sometimes can be extremely difficult and even distasteful. At the same time, there are tasks that need to be done, and you are the person who can do them.

The third thing that Jesus would want us to keep in mind, especially as it relates to our spiritual service and our work for Him, is that you can miss the opportunity to do what God would have you to do. So today, get to work! Capture the opportunities that God gives to you, be a blessing to others, and see if at the close of the day it does not fill your heart with joy.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

FBC, BOYLE, MS IS SEEKING resumes for a Pastor to lead our church according to God's will. Qualifications will be those set forth in the New Testament 1 Timothy 3. Submittal deadline is Sept. 30. Please forward resume to: FBC Boyle c/o PSC, P. O. Box 218, Boyle, MS 38730.

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH in the Clarkdale Community of Lauderdale County, MS, is seeking God's man for the full time position of Associate Pastor of Youth and Education. Please email resumes to prawnson@gmail.com or mail to NHBC Search Committee, 6573 Hwy 145, Meridian, MS 39301.

PELAHATCHIE BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a part-time minister of music for worship services and adult choir. Please forward resume to the: PBC search committee, attention: Due McKinion, PO Box 876, Pelahatchie, MS 39145, email: due@rankincounty.org.

BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF STUDENTS for growing youth ministry. Must be God-focused, visionary, motivated. Willing to work into full-time position in near future. Students also welcome to apply. Submit resume to Johns Baptist Church Music Search, 5413 Highway 18, Brandon, MS 39042.

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SEEKING PART-TIME MINISTER OF Music at Looxahoma Baptist Church (seven miles East of Senatobia, MS). Candidates need to be able to read music, and lead a blended style of worship. Send resumes to looxahomaba1036@bellouth.net, or LBC, C/O Music Minister Search Team, 808 Lyles Road, Senatobia, MS 38668.

FBC, PLANTERSVILLE IS SEEKING A part-time or bi-vocational Director of Youth Ministries. Send resumes to P O Box 487, Plantersville, MS 38862 or frstapst800@comcast.net

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Task force answers questions, responds to concerns

ROGERS, Ar. (BP and local reports) — Questions raised during the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) task force's Aug. 26 "listening session" ran the gamut from concerns about smaller-membership Southern Baptist churches and developing young leaders to touchier subjects like how calls for denominational reorganization fit in with the need for renewed missions passion.

More than 400 pastors and laypeople gathered at the Church at Pinnacle Hills in Rogers, Ar., for a barbecue lunch provided by the church and a question-and-answer session with four task force members: chairman Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor of First Church in Springdale, Ar.; Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Church in Woodstock, Ga.; Al Gilbert, pastor of Calvary Church in Winston-Salem, N.C.; and R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Smaller membership churches

T.O. Spicer, pastor of Sang Avenue Church in Fayetteville, Ar., noted that Southern Baptists are a denomination of smaller-membership churches and asked what role those churches would play in a Great Commission resurgence.

Hunt and Floyd both responded by affirming that their roots lay in smaller-membership churches and that a Great Commission resurgence would entail all churches,

regardless of size, seeing themselves, not denominational entities, as the "missions-sending stations" of the SBC.

Mohler noted that, "The church we are looking for is the church with a big heart, not big numbers." If Southern Baptists don't shift their focus and start looking at the heart, rather than numbers, "we are going to die of number infection," Mohler said.



Mohler

Young leaders
Steve Moore of Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith, Ar., raised the question about the need for Southern Baptists to figure

out how to "reach deeply" into America's increasingly secular culture and develop young leaders.

Mohler replied that he sees a generation coming into church leadership that wonders what the Southern Baptist Convention is about and is "way ahead of us" in commitment to the Great Commission. "The fuse on this thing is very short. Our credibility is on the line," Mohler said. "If all we talk about is going back to an old form of denominational loyalty while a lost world is waiting, then shame on us."



Floyd

Culture change

Steve Jordan, pastor of Hickory Creek Church in Lowell, Ar., asked how churches

could be helped to overcome barriers created by the profound changes in American culture.

Mohler responded that Southern Baptists in the United States have not yet learned to do what their overseas missionaries learned generations ago "and that is to recognize what it takes to reach people who don't look like us, speak like us, sound like us and believe like us."

Great Commission passion

Jeff Thompson, director of missions for Concord Association in Fort Smith, Ar., asked how the need for denominational reorganization expressed by the Great Commission Resurgence Declaration, which preceded the formation of the task force, related to the task force's commission to inspire greater passion for the Great Commission.

Floyd responded that the group's goal is to bring a plan to the 2010 SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., that would outline "how we can more faithfully and effectively fulfill the Great Commission around the world, in our churches, in our state conventions, in our national convention and all we do together."

While the task force can "create actions" for the national body, it cannot do the same thing for other levels of Baptist work around the country, Floyd added.

North American Mission Board

Buddy Hunt, pastor of First Church in Tahlequah, Ok., asked whether the task force might bring a recommendation to dissolve the North American Mission Board or merge it with

the International Mission Board. He followed it with a question about the message being sent to Southern Baptists by the fact that several task force members' churches do not give very large percentages to the SBC's Cooperative Program.

Hunt replied it was "poor journalism" that suggested the task force would consider disassembling the North American Mission Board. "There is absolutely no quote whatsoever to go with that. It is ludicrous," Hunt said. The idea of combining the two mission boards was raised by others unrelated to the task force, he added.



Gilbert

Cooperative Program

On the issue of Cooperative Program giving, Hunt noted that his congregation increased its CP giving last year by 11%. "When we judge a person's commitment to the Great Commission by Cooperative Program, if we're not careful, [it] has the potential to elevate the Cooperative Program above the Great Commission," Hunt said.

According to the 2008 SBC Annual Church Profile, Hunt's church last year gave 2.5% of undesignated gifts to the Cooperative Program, even with the 11% increase he noted earlier.

A church ought to be judged on the dollars it is giving — rather than the percentage — and whether a pastor is leading his congregation to deeper levels of commitment to the Great Commission, Hunt said.

Scott Gordon, pastor of Claycomo Church in Kansas City, Mo., returned later in the session to say he was perplexed by a "both/and" concern about the Cooperative



Hunt

Program: on the one hand that Cooperative Program giving should not be a measure of commitment to the Great Commission but at the same time that more CP giving was needed to send missionaries overseas.

Hunt replied by asking whether the "determining factor" of Cooperative Program commitment is a certain percentage or a commitment to increased giving. "If I lead our church from giving \$30,000 to \$525,000, is that growth in Cooperative Program giving or should 10% be the standard? And is that a biblical standard or have we, like the Pharisees, come up with laws outside the book that I preach?"

Mohler said Southern Baptists are "way past" issues from 1845 or 1925 and need to ask themselves what faithfulness requires of them today. If Southern Baptists will "do the right thing" about getting more energy, money, and people focused on unreached peoples, he said the Lord will take care of other priorities that need to be addressed.

According to the 2008 SBC Annual Church Profile, Mohler's home church, Highview Church in Louisville, Ky., last year gave 3.5% of undesignated gifts to the Cooperative Program.

Task Force Chairman Ronnie Floyd's church gave 2.2% of undesignated gifts to CP, according to the 2008 SBC Annual Church Profile, while the church of the other task force member present, Al Gilbert, gave 3.4% of undesignated gifts to CP in 2008.

'No sacred cows'

Patrick Payton, senior pastor of Stonegate Fellowship in Midland, Texas, closed the session with a statement, rather than a question. If the Southern Baptist Convention was a business, it would be dead, Payton said; all the employees would be fired and the enterprise would be started all over again.

"I'm pleading with you to have no sacred cows," Payton said. "It was a crisis that caused the Conservative Resurgence but people do not see the crisis we are in now. They do not see the fact that we are dead and dying." He urged the task force to "bring the crisis to the table next year [in Orlando] and absolutely blow it up."

Following the luncheon, the task force convened in a private session at the nearby Embassy Suites Hotel, with plans to continue its meeting through the morning of Aug. 27.

The GCR Task Force does not have any Mississippi Baptist members.

Editor's note: Audio from the luncheon is available online at www.pray4gcr.com/2009/08/gcr-luncheon-audio/.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD.



1. Williams and Walters



2. New Zion Church, Crystal Springs



3. Bethel Church, Smith Association



4. First Church, Runnelstown



5. Oak Hill Church, Meridian

1. Kenneth Walters, Sumrall, recently celebrated 50 years in the ministry by preaching at his first church, Steele Church, Forest. Shown are pastor Reggie Williams and Walters.

2. New Zion Church, Crystal Springs, recently held a baby dedication with nine families participating. Webb Armstrong, pastor. Shown are the participants.

3. The youth of Bethel Church, Smith Association, collected supplies for the Smith County Food Pantry. Shown are Jacob McGriff, Kellie Black, Abigail Troth, Sarah Mouton, Carlie Vinzant, and Margie Black.

4. First Church, Runnelstown, recently ordained three deacons. Shown, from left, are Chris Thornton, Kenneth Freeman, and Terry Shoemaker. Chris Layton, pastor.

5. Oak Hill Church, Meridian, recently ordained two deacons. Shown, from left, are Jeffery Wilson, Dean Tolbird, and pastor Mike Russell.

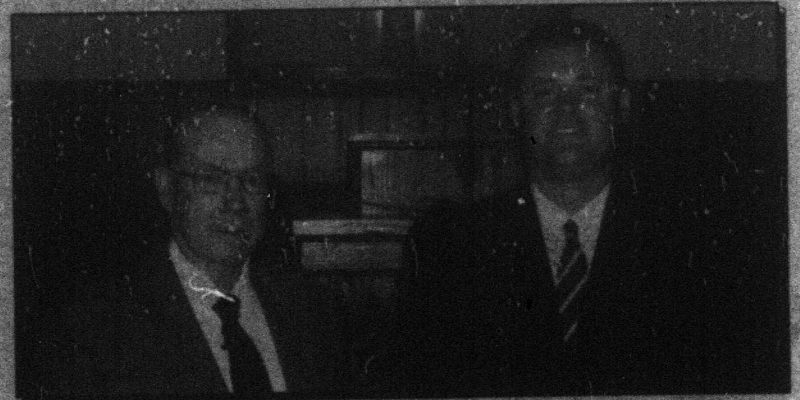
6. Wallerville Church, New Albany, ordained Ryan Black as deacon Aug. 9. Shown are pastor Horace Thomas and Black.

7. Fifteen members of Corinth Church, Purvis, went on a mission trip to Wauseon, Ohio, where they helped with VBS. Shown are the participants.

8. The ladies of WMU, Rienzi Church, Rienzi, packed nine boxes of needed supplies for soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan during their Aug. 17 meeting. Shown are the participants.

9. First Church, Okolona, recognizes their children's Bible drillers. Shown are Mary Clark Herrod, Hannah Henry, Howell Palmer, Kendall Young, and leaders Morris and Liz Perry.

10. Corinth Church, Magee, recognizes their youth Bible drillers. Front row: Erin Winningham, Karey McWilliams, Kadee Williamson, Taylor White, and Jamie Brinson; back row: Wesley Varner, Justin Winningham, James Weathersby, Clayton Giles, and Will Walker.



6. Wallerville Church, New Albany



7. Corinth Church, Purvis



8. Rienzi Church, Rienzi



9. First Church, Okolona



10. Corinth Church, Magee

Obscure Old Testament child king leads to Josiah Road

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — It is perhaps fitting that an obscure eight-year-old king is the inspiration behind an emerging student initiative.

Although the biblical account of King Josiah is often overshadowed in Sunday School classes by his more prominent ancestors such as David and Solomon, he nevertheless completely revolutionized the culture of his kingdom in a way no one before or after him did.

That is exactly what those behind the movement called Josiah Road hope to accomplish as well. Its motto, Calling All Students to Influence, Stand, and Lead, is outlined at www.josiahroad.com.

The idea for the ministry took shape at the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville. The ERLC is most widely known for its work on cultural issues and public policy. Josiah Road is an effort to encourage the next generation of leaders to stand up and lead out as Christ-followers in the student community.

The ministry extended its reach recently with the release of a five-part student Bible study of the principles gleaned from the biblical account of Josiah.

Harold Harper, ERLC executive vice president, connected with the story of King Josiah through the challenges of raising children in what he called a "morally bankrupt society."

"I'm just a parent trying to raise my son and daughter in a culture that scares me to death," he told Baptist Press, "but I find hope in the story of King Josiah."

The account to which Harper was drawn is striking indeed. The book of 2 Chronicles records that Josiah was only eight years old when he became king of a land filled with idol worship practices that were encouraged by many of the kings before him.

At the age of 16, "he began to seek the God of his father David" (2 Chronicles 34:3). As a teenager, Josiah tore down the idols in Judah, restored the temple of God, celebrated the Passover, and presided over the rediscovery of the Book of the Law.

It may be said that Josiah singlehandedly transformed a culture that worshiped idols to one that worshiped the true God, a stunning achievement that inspired the genesis of this ministry in his name in the 21st century.

Josiah Road officially began at the 2007 Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio as a Web-based ministry to point students to the story of King Josiah, who accomplished great things for God even though he was very young.

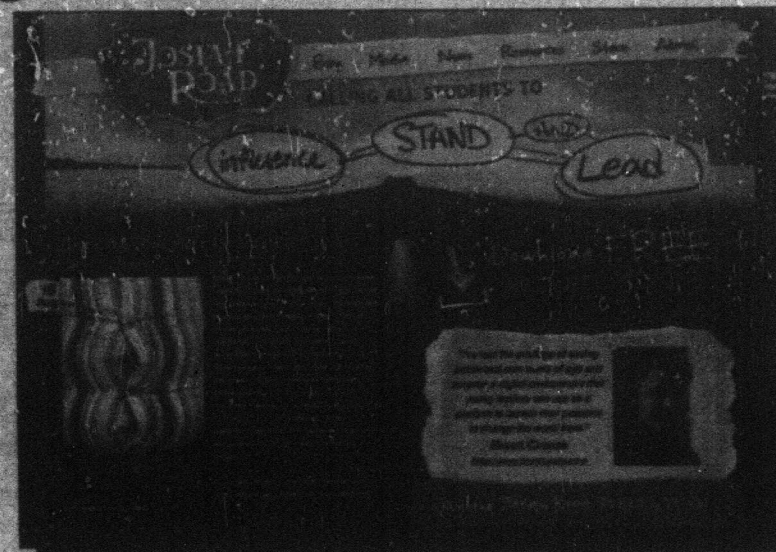
"My son Luke really wanted to be a leader, but he was all alone at age 13," Harper said. "Here I could point him to a young man who was a leader at age 8. We learn all through Scripture that God uses young people."

The hope is that once students see how Josiah stood for the Lord amidst a crooked generation, they will be motivated to do the same, Harper said. To accomplish this, Josiah Road hosts on its website devotional-style blogs written by students, as well as news stories and videos about students who are actively leading.

"We want to give a place for students and youth pastors to be encouraged, to find resources," said Josh Ulmer, project coordinator for Josiah Road. "A lot of times, parents and other adults say they want students to lead but don't give them the platform and encourage them along."

The new five-part Bible study, available for download from the Josiah Road website, is designed for youth pastors or student leaders to go through in small groups.

Harper's son Luke, who helped write the study, hopes it will create a new generation of Josiahs in young men and women his age. "I hope they see they have that potential," he said. "I want to open their eyes, to say all to students, 'This guy led a nation at the age of eight.'"



Jody Johnston, a 19-year-old student preparing to enter college, would never admit it, but he is exactly the kind of leader Josiah Road hopes to create, Harper said. Bold in his witness and confident in the Lord, Johnston, who writes for Josiah Road, noted how the ministry has impacted his life.

"Josiah Road has connected me to other modern-day

Josiahs," Johnston said. "It has revived me in those times when I was struggling and it has challenged me to grow."

Johnston believes that today's students must act to change their culture, which is why he views the story of Josiah as so important. "Just as Josiah changed what he saw was wrong in his world, so we are to do in our world," Johnston said.

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. **Damascus Church, Franklin County:** 150th anniversary, Sept. 6, beginning at 10:30 a.m., with preaching, special singing and dinner on the grounds; Pat Lofton, speaker.

Jewell Greer, music; Jim Rickles, pastor.

Ronnie Cottingham, music; Mike Grenn, pastor.

3. **Union West Church, Oxford:** Revival, Sept. 13-16; Kevin Jackson, speaker; Andrew Basinger, music; Billy Childs, pastor.

5. **Holly Bluff Church, Holly Bluff:** Homecoming, Sept. 13, 10:45 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner and singing, 1:30 p.m.; Andy May, speaker.

2. **Mount Vernon Church, Meridian:** Revival, Sept. 13-16; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Tommy Jones, speaker.

4. **North Columbia Church, Columbia:** Revival, Sept. 6-9; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Mark Strum, speaker.

6. **Mt. Nelson Church, Philadelphia:** Homecoming, Sept. 13, 10:45 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Doug Warren, speaker; Tom McCurley, pastor.

STAFF CHANGES

1. **First Church, Shannon,** has called Matthew Reeder as youth pastor effective Aug. 2. He is a student at Blue Mountain College.

2. **Calvary Church, Waynesboro,** has called Whit Lewis as pastor. He is shown with his wife, Leanne.

7. **Bowlin Church, Sallis:** Revival, Sept. 6-9; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Garner, speaker.

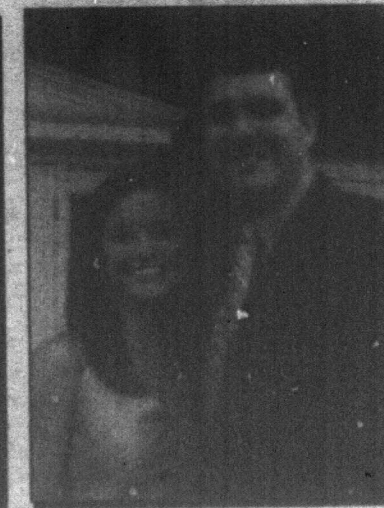
8. **New Prospect Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, Sept. 13; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., with noon meal and 1:15 p.m.; Ken Kirk, speaker; Ruth Owens and Gloryland Quartet, music; Willie Welch, pastor.

9. **West Marks Church, Marks:** Revival, Sept. 13-16; Darryl Smith, speaker; Larry Kilgore, music; John Shackelford, pastor; for more information, call (662) 326-4264.

10. **First Church, Sharon:** Revival, Sept. 20-23; Jim Futral, speaker; Lavon Gray, music.



1. Reeder



2. The Lewises

JUST FOR THE RECORD

11. **East Louisville Church, Louisville,** will host a concert by Freedomland Quartet Sept. 6, 1:30 p.m. A love offering will be received.

12. **Bowlin Church, Sallis,** will host Brad Mount Sept. 6. He will sing in the morning service and again from 1-3 p.m.

13. **New Orleans Seminary** will host an alumni luncheon on October 27 during the 2009 annual meeting of the Mississippi

Baptist Convention. The luncheon will begin at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall West at First Church, Jackson, the site of the annual meeting. Guest speaker is Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Seminary. Tickets are \$10 per person. To purchase tickets or for more information, contact Matt Buckles, pastor, First Church, Vicksburg, at P.O. Box 390, Vicksburg, MS 39181. Telephone: (601) 636-2493. E-mail: buckles@fbcvicksburg.org.

OBITUARY

Don R. Taylor, 48, Baptist evangelist, passed away Aug. 24. Services were held 11 a.m. Aug. 27 at Conehatta Church. Richard Ethridge, Tommy Anderson, and Jimmy Jones officiated with burial in the Conehatta cemetery.

Taylor was ordained to preach in 1994. He pastored from 1994-2001. He then served in evangelism from 2001 to the present. He served in the foreign mission field. His evangelism association was known as Harvest Time Ministries.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Lesia Taylor, Conehatta; one daughter, Kristin Clark (Jonathon), Philadelphia; two sons, Brian Taylor (Shannon), Conehatta; Scott Taylor (Ellen), Conehatta; seven grandchildren; one step-grandson; mother, Afton Taylor, Decatur; brother, Billy Taylor, Decatur; and one maternal grandmother. He was preceded in death by his father, Donald Ervin Taylor, and one brother, Gary Taylor.

Churches face increasing difficulties in Kyrgyzstan

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (BP) — Christians in the central Asian country of Kyrgyzstan have been told not to meet for worship without registration, but government officials are making it nearly impossible for churches to receive approval.

Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet nation of about 5.4 million people, is 75% Muslim and 20% Russian Orthodox. In January a new religion law was enacted, and since then officials have checked up on or raided many minority religious communities, telling them they have no right to gather, according to Forum 18 News Service.

Officials also are cracking down on the distribution and possession of religious literature.

Forum 18, a religious freedom watch group based in Norway, said pastors and church members have been summoned for questioning regarding their worship services. The religion law requires all approved religious organizations to have no fewer than 200 members, which means church groups must collect 200 signatures in a climate where many are reluctant to be identified as Christian.

Also, in order to obtain a permit to meet in a specific building, the law says the building must be 1,090 yards away from any school and more than six miles from any mosque. Some sources have noted to Forum 18 that the large number of mosques in the country make the guidelines particularly challenging.

Church groups also have difficulty finding space to meet because public buildings are not allowed to rent to them and private owners hesitate to rent to religious organizations, the news service said. Government officials even have sought to keep house churches from meeting in private residences.

Regarding literature, the religion law imposes censorship, stating that "Religious organizations and missions can import religious literature and other printed, audio, and video materials into

the Kyrgyz Republic only after passing examination by a state religious expert."

The religion law also bans, without defining, "aggressive action aimed at proselytism," Forum 18 said.

Most recently, Kyrgyzstan established a Coordinating Council on the Struggle against Religious Extremism "for the purpose of ensuring concerted action and coordination of activity of state agencies and local governments of Kyrgyzstan in prevention of the spread of and resistance to religious extremism, fundamentalism and conflicts on religious grounds."

The decree, issued Aug. 5, allows "suppressing the ideas of various extremist and destructive groups."

A representative from the State Agency for Religious Affairs in Kyrgyzstan told Forum 18 that the council is still formulating its policy but that it is concerned with the "abnormality" of a rising number of people changing faith, especially young ethnic Kyrgyz joining Christian churches.

The representative said none of the existing registered religious organizations are considered extremist, but he refused to discuss groups that are unregistered or are threatened by the new religion law.

Forum 18 said various religious organizations in Kyrgyzstan have expressed concerns about the council. One pastor said he didn't understand why the council is necessary.

"We already have law enforcement agencies in the country to detect who breaks the laws. I am afraid they are trying to tighten the noose around our necks," the pastor said, adding that he believes the council was created to "make life hard" for Protestant churches in the country.

Another pastor told Forum 18 that his house church is in an illegal situation because they don't have a permit to meet and will either have to go underground or "unite with other groups, despite confessional differences, to gain legal status."



Joel Griffith of the Slavic Gospel Association told Mission Network News that churches in Kyrgyzstan seemed to have little difficulty meeting for worship and holding children's ministries until the 2005 presidential election. The same candidate was reelected this summer, ushering in added suppression.

"They're purposely wanting to make it very difficult for new places of worship to be registered," Griffith said. "So if they institute an impossible requirement like that, then they effectively have been able to put their thumb down on any new group of believers that would want to come together and form a church."

One official told Forum 18 he didn't see why religious groups needed to spread out across the country. Instead, they could all gather in one place and achieve the 200-member threshold, he said.

"Now of course, logic says if you have a group that lives in one part of the country, how in the world could you try to bring somebody from the other side of the country to gather in one place to try to worship?" Griffith said.

The Slavic Gospel Association, Mission Network News said, partners with 64 registered Baptist churches in Kyrgyzstan, which have a membership of more than 3,000. Griffith said there is hope that the Kyrgyz Parliament could reconsider parts of the religion law, and he asked "Christians worldwide to pray for the situation in Kyrgyzstan."

"When you look back over history, the more pressure they try to apply on the churches, the more the churches grow," Griffith told Mission Network News. "We have hope and trust that the Lord's going to continue to build His church..."

Wisconsin groups fighting same sex domestic partnership law

MADISON, Wis. (BP) — A lawsuit seeking to overturn Wisconsin's same sex domestic partnerships law as unconstitutional received a boost Aug. 21 when the state's attorney general announced that he, too, believes the law conflicts with Wisconsin's constitutional marriage amendment.

Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, a Republican, said he will not defend the law in court and is recommending that the state hire private attorneys. The law, which went into effect in early August, establishes a domestic partnership registry and grants homosexual couples some but not all of the legal benefits of marriage.

Van Hollen drew sharp criticism from Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle, who signed the law and says other attorneys believe it is constitutional.

The lawsuit was filed July 23 with the Wisconsin Supreme Court by several pro-family attorneys, who argue that Wisconsin's marriage amendment — passed by 59% of voters in 2006 — expressly forbids anything like domestic partnerships. The amendment

prohibits not only same sex marriage but also "a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage."

The Alliance Defense Fund and its allied attorneys filed the suit on behalf of Wisconsin Family Action, the primary sponsor of the 2006 amendment. The high court has not said whether it will hear the case.

"I will not ignore the Constitution," Van Hollen said in a statement. "My oath isn't to the legislature or the governor. My duty is to the people of the State of Wisconsin and the highest expression of their will — the Constitution of the State of Wisconsin. When the people have spoken by amending our Constitution, I will abide by their command. When policymakers have ignored their words, I will not."

Van Hollen said his decision isn't based on a "policy disagreement." He added that as attorney general, he defends laws "that I wouldn't have voted for if I were a policymaker," but he said that the criteria under state law used to define domestic partnerships and marriages "are nearly identical."

For instance, he said, under the law each must involve 1) two people, 2) who have "the capacity to contract," 3) who are unmarried and 4) who are no closer in relation than second cousins.

"To defend the law would require me to ignore the command of the voters when they passed the recent marriage amendment or to ignore the expressly stated intent of the legislature in enacting [the law]," he said. "I am unwilling to do either."

Doyle, who has conflicted with social conservatives in the state throughout his time in office, said the law is "clearly" defensible.

"The Attorney General's job is to represent the state and defend state law when there is a good faith defense to be made," Doyle said in a statement. "His representation should not be based on whether he likes the state law... Constitutional law experts have examined the domestic partnership registry and believe it is sound and not in conflict with the state constitution."

Ironically, an action by Doyle six years ago may have led to the current controversy. In 2003 he vetoed a bill that would have defined in state law that marriage is the union of one

man and one woman. Undaunted, the legislature began the lengthy process to place a marriage amendment on the ballot — a process that does not involve the governor.

COLLEGE NEWS

1. Jay Page has joined the faculty of Blue Mountain College as chair of the department of business and assistant professor of business. Page earned his associates degree from Vincennes (Ind.) University, a bachelor of science in finance, an MBA and a master of public administration degree from Indiana State University. He is currently a doctoral student at Mississippi State University.
2. Blue Mountain College and the Northeast Mississippi Pastors Conference will team up for their annual Healthy Church Conference on Sept. 14 on the BMC campus. The one-day conference, "A Good Minister of Jesus Christ" will provide inspiration and instruction for pastors, worship leaders and church staff members in the areas of preaching, worship and evangelism. The worship services will include sermons by Jim Futral, Calvin Miller, and Steve Gaines and will feature inspirational music led by Mike Harland. Registration for the conference will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the conference will conclude at 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided for a cost of \$5 in the BMC dining hall. While pre-registration for the conference is not required, it is requested in order to provide an accurate count for meals and conference materials. To pre-register or for more information contact Ronald Meeks, director of church relations at BMC, (662) 678-4771 ext. 179, or rmeeks@bmc.edu.

Miss. Baptist colleges rank well in U.S. News, Forbes

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Forty-two member institutions of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities (IABCU) have been listed in the 2009 rankings of America's Best Colleges by U.S. News and World Report and Forbes.com.

U.S. News and World Report

U.S. News and World Report, based in New York City, began ranking America's best colleges in 1983, bases its college ratings on data provided by the institutions and by a survey of administrators at peer colleges and universities.

Institutions are grouped into four categories according to a system developed by the Carnegie Fund for the Advancement of Teaching.

The two larger categories, Universities - Master's and Baccalaureate Colleges, are each divided into four divisions: North, South, Midwest and West. Twenty-six of the 42 IABCU institutions ranked by U.S. News were listed in the top tier of their respective categories (to be noted by * in this article).

Baylor University* and Samford University*, the only IABCU institutions classified as National Universities, were listed in the top tier of this category. The 262 schools in the National Universities group focus heavily on research and award a broad range of degrees through the doctoral level.

Four IABCU schools were ranked in the Liberal Arts Colleges category: Georgetown College, Judson College, Carson-Newman College and North Greenville University. The schools in

this group emphasize undergraduate education and grant at least half of their degrees in the arts and sciences.

Eighteen IABCU schools were ranked in the Baccalaureate Colleges category. Colleges in this category focus on undergraduate education but grant fewer than half of their degrees in the liberal arts disciplines.

Thirteen IABCU schools were listed in the Baccalaureate - South division, with Ouachita Baptist University* ranked number one for the third consecutive year. Others listed in the Baccalaureate-South division were Shorter College*, Campbellsville University*, Anderson University*, Blue Mountain College*, University of the Cumberlands*, Mars Hill College*, Bluefield College*, Louisiana College*, Virginia Intermont College, Williams Baptist College, Brewton-Parker College and Chowan University.

Oklahoma Baptist University* once again ranked number two in the Baccalaureate - West division, with Howard Payne University* and East Texas Baptist University* also listed in the top tier of colleges in the West.

Judson University* (Illinois) ranked in the top tier of schools in the Baccalaureate - Midwest division. Hannibal-LaGrange College also was ranked in this region.

The 574 institutions listed in the Universities - Master's category primarily award bachelor's and master's degrees.

The Universities - Master's - South rankings include Belmont University*, Mercer University*, Union University*, Mississippi College*,

Campbell University*, Gardner-Webb University*, Palm Beach Atlantic University*, Charleston Southern University, William Carey University, and the University of Mobile.

The Universities - Master's - Midwest listings include Southwest Baptist University and Missouri Baptist University. The Master's - West group includes University of Mary-Hardin Baylor*, California Baptist University*, Houston Baptist University*, Dallas Baptist University*, Hardin-Simmons University, and Wayland Baptist University.

U.S. News introduced a new listing of "Up and Coming Colleges & Universities." According to U.S. News, top higher education administrators throughout the country listed schools "that are making improvements in academics, faculty, students, campus life, diversity, and facilities. These schools are worth watching because they are making promising and innovative changes."

Belmont University and Union University ranked second and fourth respectively in the Master's Universities - South category. Anderson University and Campbellsville University ranked second and fourth respectively in the Baccalaureate - South division.

Forbes.com introduced its first ranking of America's Best Colleges in 2008. In conjunction with the Center for College Affordability and Productivity at Ohio University, Forbes ranked 569 undergraduate colleges and universities, primarily institutions from the top tiers of the U.S. News list of best colleges.

Forbes

Forbes magazine, also based in New York City, based its rankings on the quality of the education provided by the institutions, and how much their students have achieved.

Forbes describes its college rating system as an alternative to the popular U.S. News & World Report rating on America's best colleges. Forbes.com rankings rely on data from student evaluations of courses and instructors on the website RateMyProfessors.com.

These results account for one-quarter of the Forbes assessment. Another 25% of its evaluation depends on how many of a school's alumni, adjusted for enrollment, are listed in Who's Who in America.

The other half of the ranking is based equally on three factors: the average amount of student debt at graduation; the percentage of students graduating in four years; and the number of students or faculty, also adjusted for enrollment, who have won nationally competitive awards such as Rhodes Scholarships or Nobel Prizes.

Ten IABCU institutions have been included again in the Forbes.com list for 2009.

Oklahoma Baptist University was the highest-ranked IABCU school at 109th on the Forbes list, followed closely by Carson-Newman College, North Greenville University, Mississippi College, Ouachita Baptist University, Samford University, Union University, Georgetown College, Baylor University, Mercer University, and Belmont University.

Lifelong prayer warrior keeping faith despite hardship, loss

NOVOKUZNETSK, Russia (BP) — Knowing that her father gave his life for his faith has made 82-year-old Yelisavyeta Krukova a lifelong prayer warrior.

Krukova is a longtime member of the Baptist church in Novokuznetsk, a city of more than 500,000 in southern Siberia. She organizes

overnight prayer vigils for every Wednesday and Friday. She enlists people to pray and if anyone has a scheduling conflict, that person must notify Krukova so she can find another church member to fill in.

For her and the church, the prayer time is a serious ministry that cannot be broken.

Krukova, who vividly remembers the times of fear and persecution for the evangelical church in Russia, shared her family story. "My father, Nestor, was a Christian evangelical minister in Russia before the Russian revolution of 1917. My father and mother moved to western Siberia, to what was then called Kuznetsk, in 1912.

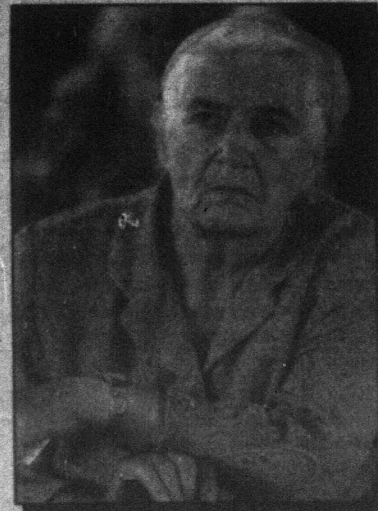
"My father shared the Gospel with all around him. After the (Bolshevik) revolution, he continued to preach and teach despite the dangers. He was arrested and sent to prison twice when I was a child — one time for six months, another time for a year. Not so long. He came home to my mother and us, but he would not stop preaching and teaching.

"In 1938, my father was arrested again and sent to another prison, this time for 10 years but even in prison he would preach, and in December of 1944 he was shot and killed there because he would not stop preaching.

"My family relied on prayer for our every existence. Times were hard. I had nine brothers and sisters, 10 of us in all, but five died. Only five of us lived to be grown. Life was hard, but we loved each other and loved God.

"This city has had three names, Kuznetsk, Stalinsk and now Novokuznetsk. Our family lived here and in 1944 we joined the Baptist evangelical church.

"I met my husband and we married and had 10 children. I have 57 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. I live with my husband, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren in a beautiful house my children built for me. My family loves me and respects me.



STILL PRAYING — Yelisavyeta Krukova, 82, is the prayer coordinator for the Baptist church in Novokuznetsk, Russia, where she has been a member since 1944. Her preacher father was persecuted and eventually executed by the communist government because he would not stop preaching the Gospel. (BP photo)

"We older women must pray. We pray well because we know it is important. I am in charge of our prayer ministry. People know we must take it seriously."

Your Margaret Lackey gifts allowed more than 1,400 girls to attend Garaywa Camp and Conference Center this summer, where 66 children made professions of faith.



WHEREVER HE LEADS
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THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is dedicated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals select to pay tribute to others through this meaningful and lasting memorial. Gifts of Honor and Memory are a wonderful way to show appreciation for someone who has made a difference in your life. Gifts of Honor and Memory can be placed in the Village View or in a special book. For more information, call 601-922-2242 or email bcv@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

JULY 1 - JULY 26, 2009

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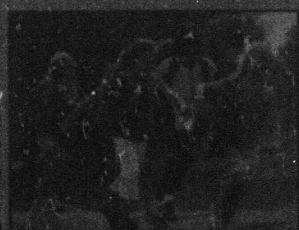
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Thank You for Getting Us Back in School

Each year The Baptist Children's Village cares for an average of 300 children. Many of those children are with us at the start of the school year, and yet many come later throughout the year. Below you will see our biggest needs now, as we prepare for the additional children who will come into our care throughout this school year. We have received plenty of school supplies (paper, pencils, crayons, notebooks, etc.) Thank you for so generously providing these things for our children. We appreciate your help in meeting these additional needs.



- School uniform sponsors \$20 ea. (\$100 to dress a child for a week)
- ACT Test fees \$28 ea.
- School Pictures \$20 ea.
- Yearbook fees \$30 Jr. High
- Yearbook fees \$50 Sr. High
- X-Large Backpacks
- Cash gifts designated for school supplies or Wal-Mart Gift Cards to purchase supplies as needed

Go Green for The BCV

Many of you use ink cartridges in your printers at home or at your business and just throw them away. This recycling program provides a way to protect the environment and turn those used ink cartridges, toner cartridges, cell phones and accessories, i-pods, laptops, and game systems into cash for The Baptist Children's Village. We use two companies - www.recycle4charity.com and www.recyclefirst.com. Both of them will provide labels that you can attach to a box of recyclables. Either UPS or FedEx can pick up the boxes and it does not cost you or us anything. The labels (that we can provide for you) tell the company to designate the recycle dollars to The BCV. For more information and to order shipping labels call 601-922-2242 or email bcv@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

Current Employment Opportunities

HOUSEPARENTS

7-day on/ 7-day off shift
Husband & Wife Team Only

The Baptist Children's Village has an opening for Christian, mission-minded, individuals without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of houseparent. Applicants must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff to be considered for the available positions. Houseparents receive an excellent salary with benefits. A private bedroom and meals are included while on duty.

The primary job responsibility of a house parent is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and/or youth residents. The duties of a houseparent are many and are varied and somewhat dependent upon the specific program and cottage to which assigned. The following list of responsibilities is to provide an overview of the job and is not an exhaustive list.

Other job responsibilities:

- Provide immediate supervision of residents in the cottage and other settings
- Participate fully in the implementation of each resident's Plan of Care
- Model Christian values and lifestyle for residents and their families
- Model a healthy physical, social and emotional lifestyle for residents
- Serve as the primary transportation resource for residents of assigned cottage

Job requirements:

- 25-65 years of age
- Good physical, mental and emotional health
- Stable, even disposition
- Valid driver's license with a good driving record
- Educational background must be at a minimum a high school diploma or GED
- Experience in child rearing is preferred
- Must be flexible and able to work in a team environment
- Good organizational skills

For more information or to apply for a position, please call 601-922-2242 or email: bcv@baptistchildrensvillage.com

BRING THE BCV TO YOU

As you plan your upcoming meetings and events for this fall and even throughout the year, please think of The Baptist Children's Village. We appreciate every opportunity to share with people face-to-face about God's work in this ministry to children. We can bring your group insight and encouragement as we talk about the exciting future of The Baptist Children's Village and its role in meeting the needs of families throughout Mississippi. To schedule a speaker, call 601-922-2242 or email bcv@baptistchildrensvillage.com

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

The Jesus People Should Know

Mark 1:1-3, 7, 9-13, 21-28

By Ken Anderson

Many churches begin their new year in September. Often the new year is accompanied by a new and clear focus that will be the center of its ministries. It is fitting that this series of Bible studies examines the Gospel according to Mark. Mark began his gospel with a focus on the coming of a new age. A new age centered on the revelation of God himself in human flesh as mankind's suffering servant substitute. The studies can be reminders of and a renewal to the central focus of the church - Jesus Christ.

Mark's purpose was to encourage the persecuted Christians in Rome. The martyrdom of Christians under Emperor Nero caused the believers to raise serious questions about faith and persecution.

This study is divided into

three sections of the first chapter of Mark.

Mark 1:1-3

With passion Mark declared Jesus to be the Son of God and that Jesus' messenger John the Baptist fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies (Isa. 40:3, Malachi 3:1). The gospel means "good news." Good news not only about Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ himself is the good news. The name Jesus comes from a family of Hebrew names meaning "Jehovah is salvation." The word Christ means "anointed" and in Hebrew means "messiah." The "Son of God" anchors the truth of the deity of Christ. He is completely divine and He is completely human. His birth, baptism, life, miracles, transfiguration, death, and resurrection confirm his deity.

Mark 1:7, 9-13

In this section, John the Baptist is introduced preaching Christ's superior position in comparison



Anderson

to himself. He made it clear that he John was not the messiah. To illustrate his point he used a well-known custom of the time. William Hendriksen explained that in "Jewish tradition the difference between a 'disciple' (student) and a slave was this, that a disciple was willing to perform every service for his master (teacher) that a menial servant would perform except to untie his sandals" (New Testament Commentary, p.41-42 - Italics mine). With humility he declared that he was unworthy even to be a slave to Jesus.

In verses 9-13 - There are three points concerning Christ's baptism and temptations. First, Jesus was sinless and therefore did not need to be baptized for the remission of sins. Yet he was baptized to set an example and to identify with sinners. Second, "He saw the heavens open." "A literal translation reads, 'he saw the heavens as they were being torn,' the abode of God and this earthly sphere was ripped open" (Lucien Coleman's Bible study plan, Feb. 7, 1999). Third, Satan tempted

Christ to take a moral detour from his purpose as the suffering servant. Christ's victory over Satan could have encouraged the persecuted believers to whom this gospel was written. Jesus had been before them triumphant over Satan's direct attack, and they could also be triumphant.

Mark 1:21-28

Next, Mark revealed specific groups' responses to His ministry. First, was the response of the people to Christ teaching. The worshippers expected to hear the traditional line of interpretation of the law, but they were totally shocked at Jesus teaching. He taught with a new authority. That is out of the nature of His being. Second, was the response of the unclean spirit. It is interesting that the man was in the synagogue. Having an unclean spirit would have banned him from entering. Yet Christ's presence brought out the demon in him and healed him. The unclean spirit recognized and believed in Christ's deity and His rule over them. Third, the response was also marked with questions. What did it mean? They had no immediate answers. They had never experienced a worship ser-

vice to compare to this one. They could not keep it quiet. Jesus' fame immediately spread throughout Galilee.

Insights:

Persecution: There is a certain level of contempt for those who stand for a biblical world view. Christians are scorned for, or opposed in, the exercise of their faith. On the other hand American believers have not yet endured the level of Nero's persecution nor the full blows of persecution reported in Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries today. The encouragement to be faithful is needed today as it was to those to whom Mark wrote.

Life-style: The words "immediately" and "straightway" are recorded 40 times in Mark's gospel. Mark captured the fast-moving pace of Christ's mission. Only Mark recorded that Jesus and the disciples were too busy to eat (Mark 3:20, 6:31). Our life-styles have often been described as "living in the fast lane." By comparison what of the pace of our spiritual lives?

Ken Anderson is Transitional Pastor, Tremont First Baptist Church, Tremont

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

God Is Revealed

Psalms 19:1-14

By Ginger M. Caughman

The original purpose of cathedrals, spires, and steeples was to give glory to God, lifting earthly eyes to the Creator of heaven and earth. A wonderful story by John Bates occurred during the French revolution. A revolutionist, Jean Bon St. Andre told a peasant, "I will have all your church steeples pulled down! You will not have any object by which you may be reminded of your old superstitions." The peasant replied, "But you cannot help leaving us the stars!"

1. See His Glory, 1-6

"The heavens are telling the glory of God..." (v. 1). What makes you lift your eyes and thoughts to God? Praise God for a starry night, billowy clouds, hummingbirds; ocean waves crashing against the seashore, sunrise at the Grand Canyon, majestic mountains,

layered colors of an evening sky, a watermelon field, an unfurling moon-flower or night-blooming cereus... Praise God as you think of other natural wonders. God reveals Himself in His creation.

How I have looked forward to our study of Psalms. Read and ponder the majestic words of Psalms during our study: SONGS OF LIFE. Psalms was the Hebrew hymnal and is treasured today by Christians and Jews. From 150, we will study selected Psalms in depth. By the end of November we will give thanks to God for new blessings He reveals from His magnificent Word.

The longest book in the Bible, Psalms is in the literature of poetry and wisdom: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs. Psalms is divided into five collections: 1. Psalm 1-41; 2.



Caughman

Psalm 42-72; 3. Psalm 73-89; 4. Psalm 90-106; 5. Psalm 107-150. When you don't feel like reading the Bible, browse through the Psalms until one speaks to you. Read Psalms for: celebrations of joy; songs of forgiveness; renewed faith and strength in times of doubt, weakness, or sadness; encouragement and hope in daily living; light in times of darkness; and praise to God in all circumstances.

2. Search His Word, 7-11

"God's law is perfect..." (v. 7), the entire Bible! "Not merely the law of Moses, but the doctrine of God, the whole run and rule of sacred Writ. It is God's Word rather than man's comment of God's Word which is made mighty with souls" (Charles Haddon Spurgeon). A humbling truth when I'm prayerfully seeking to write devotional comments on our Sunday School lessons. But I always remember, it's God's Word that's powerful. Apart from Him I can do nothing but

by prayers of others and abiding in Him, I pray these words will bear fruit and wing blessings in your life to our Father's glory (John 15:4-8).

As a young Christian wife and mother, I was frantically reading several devotional guides a day. Dr. Jimmie E. Knox, my wise pastor for ten years said, "Ginger, it's not just the devotionals but God's Word that is so powerfully speaking to you!"

Our granddaughter Katelyn, 10, helped me memorize an important verse: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12 NIV). Search God's Word as it applies to your life.

3. Seek His Approval 12-14.

Pray the words of Psalm 19 and Psalm 8 together. "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth... Your glory..." (Psalm 8:1). Spurgeon wrote, "We may style this Psalm 'the Song of the

Astronomer.' We observe, Psalm 8 is addressed to God for none but the Lord Himself can fully know His own glory."

Praise God for His creation and for His Word! "I will sing to the Lord all my life!" (Ps. 104:33). Do you know the poignant story of Bill Herman? While a member of the "Singing Churchmen," Bill was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Shocked by the news, he and wife Barbara sat in a Hattiesburg restaurant and talked. Bill took a napkin and jotted words praising God. The song he wrote, sang at Newhebron Baptist Church; is loved by his fellow music ministers and audiences throughout Mississippi hearing the anthem in concert or on the Churchmen CD. Now choirs across our state and nation can sing the anthem: "With Every Breath I Take" (Arranged, Mary McDonald, © Monarch, Lorenz 2003). Look in the middle of the lovely anthem for the words concluding today's Psalm. Sing and praise God!

Caughman is a member of First Church, Magee.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

THE BAPTIST Record

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Tebow: first love is Jesus, football is down the list

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (BP) — University of Florida fans would have you believe that Gainesville is the new Smallville or at least the new Metropolis. It's hard to argue against their enthusiasm.

Tim Tebow's boy-next-door reserve (ala young Clark Kent) and his on-the-field Man of Steel accomplishments make a pretty good case for the Superman persona Gator fans ascribe to him.

Tebow has helped his team win two national championships and two Southeastern Conference titles. In 2007, he became the first sophomore in the history of the game to win the Heisman trophy. As a junior, he finished third. He actually received more first-place votes than the other finalists last year, but in a weighted voting system, he received more third-place votes than second-place votes, costing him back-to-back Heismans.

Tebow also is the only player ever to pass and rush for 20 touchdowns in an NCAA season. His stats and heroics through three college football seasons have been decidedly out of this world.

Yet, Tebow's humility may be more impressive than his gridiron feats. A committed Christian, he takes an "aw shucks" approach in deflecting fan worship, gently dismissing the Superman talk as simple excitement among Florida fans.

"Gator fans are awesome," Tebow says. "They're extremely passionate about Florida football."

That's what makes them great. At the same time, because they care so much, my teammates and I have the opportunity to influence a lot of them, and I have an opportunity to share a message with them. Some people look at it as they're too into it, but I see it as a good opportunity to have a ministry with them."

Tebow's commitment to Christ is evident during almost every game and interview. Giving his faith top priority helps the celebrated quarterback deal with the fan idolization.

"There are so many temptations," he says. "You know, it can be tough and a daily struggle, but I just try to trust the Lord with everything and surround myself with good, accountable friends, people that will give me godly advice. That really keeps me in line, keeps me accountable, and that really helps me in day-to-day life."

While it would be easy to fall in love with the limelight and the spots it offers, Tebow's attitude is different from many successful college athletes. He sees each struggle and accomplishment as a blessing that God will use to reach someone new.

"There's been a lot of ups and downs that most people don't know about," he says, "but each year has been a blessing and whatever happens good or bad in the future, it's God's plan so I'm not going to worry about things. I have no expectations; I try to live that way and just have an influence for Him."

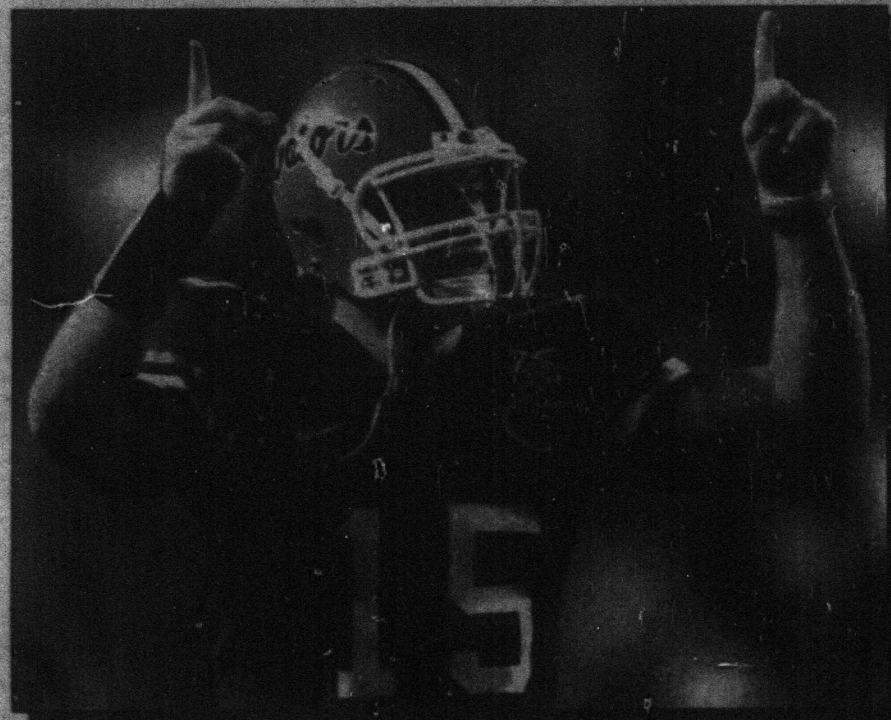
Tebow's relationship with Jesus is what he calls "the main thing" in his life. The son of missionaries, he spends much of his time giving his testimony at churches, prisons, and hospitals. Many times he's even sharing his faith in Christ on the football field as he sports a Bible verse on his eye-black or wristbands. Philippians 4:13 is one of his favorites.

"A lot of people know Philippians 4:13 — 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' — but a lot of people don't interpret that verse the right way," Tebow says. "Most people think it means I can do anything... on the football field, or I can make a lot of money. But that's not exactly what it's talking about there. It's [saying] I can be content with anything. When you're a Christian, you can [be content] because God has put you where you are. That's really a different view... I know that I have Christ in me, so I can do whatever He wants me to do, and that's how I approach everything."

Tebow understands that God has given him a great platform from which to proclaim the name of Jesus. He calls football his "ministry" and wants to use his gift to "influence people for the Kingdom of God."

"I encourage kids out there to recognize the ministry they have in their classes," Tebow says, "and do the most with that, to influence their friends in a different way." This applies to adults in business or in their neighborhoods as well. Tebow wants Jesus to have an impact far beyond comic book proportions.

Make no mistake, Tebow is not Superman. He is, however, a super man who loves the Lord Jesus Christ.



Tebow

Coaching great Dungy counsels disgraced Vick: turn to God

PLANO, Texas (BP) — While National Football League (NFL) coaches, players, and analysts have speculated how Michael Vick will fare in returning to pro football after two years in prison, his closest mentor, former Colts head coach Tony Dungy, said Vick will succeed only by putting his faith in God.

"I know Michael feels he's let a lot of people down and disappointed a lot of fans and family, but I told him the only way you can correct that is to put yourself in the Lord's hands and let Him guide you. After speaking with Michael, he's given me hope that he's headed in the right direction."

Dungy spoke to Baptist Press in advance of his inaugural Tony Dungy's Red Zone '09, a high school football kickoff event shown Aug. 25 in more than 450 movie theaters nationwide. Through the Red Zone event, Dungy hopes to show young players that talent and character go hand in hand and that making right choices is important both on and off the field.

Since retiring from the Colts last January, Dungy has been involved in a number of projects off the field, including joining NBC Sports as a commentator. But Dungy has gained the most attention as Vick's mentor for his return to the NFL with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Dungy's readiness to share his faith in Christ, evidenced in his two best-selling books and in media interviews, led him to the federal medium-security prison in Leavenworth, Kan., to meet Vick at the request of Vick's attorney.

"I had been in a lot of prisons and seen the orange jump suits and the 15-by-15-foot cell, and that's what I saw with Michael," Dungy said when

recounting previously unknown details of his visit with Vick during the spring.

Dungy had been in Vick's cell less than five minutes when he turned the conversation to what he regards as the central issue in Vick's fall from pro football grace. "I asked Michael, 'Where was the Lord in all of this?' because I wanted to know about his personal faith in Jesus."

Dungy said Vick told him about going to church almost every week with his mother in Virginia and knowing there was a God. He said Vick talked to God while growing up and continued to pray during college at Virginia Tech but when he finally made it to the NFL with the Atlanta Falcons, his faith and his life took a turn for the worse.

"Michael said he felt God had answered his prayers by getting into the NFL and maybe he didn't really need Him anymore."

During his two years in prison for his role in operating a dog fighting ring, Vick had a chance to rediscover his prayers and his faith in God, Dungy said. "Now he knows he does need God and that's going to help him make right decisions."

Dungy, who dealt with all kinds of players in his 30 years of coaching, said Vick has the possibility of becoming a Christian role model but faces plenty of scrutiny, such as a recent report of him having a drink of vodka and pineapple juice at a Philadelphia airport restaurant.

"You can't do that," Dungy was quoted by Sports Illustrated as telling Vick publicly after the incident.

"I think Michael will be a testimony to young people and have some good things to say to them," Dungy told Baptist Press. If Vick succeeds in his comeback, especial-

ly off the field, it "lets young people know these are real people and real problems and this is how they have been able to overcome them."

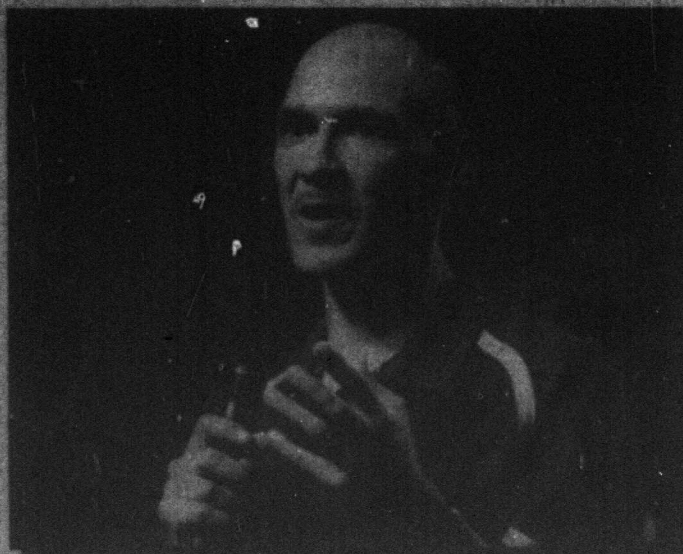
For Dungy, the chance to be a positive role model and Christian witness while on a national stage is what drives him after stepping away from the NFL sideline.

"Sometimes people are uncomfortable about you talking about the Lord and they will take it out [edit it out] on purpose, but if you say it enough times, are honest and live your life the right way, you will get enough chances to be a witness and it will come out."

Dungy said players like Florida quarterback Tim Tebow and Arizona quarterback Kurt Warner stir him to keep sharing his faith in the most winsome way to convicted felons, national media audiences and football teams everywhere.

"That's what you have to pray for, the right setting, the right time and it comes out the right way — like how Reggie White did," Dungy said of the late Hall of Fame defensive lineman and outspoken Christian.

The Red Zone website states the event will "inside tips on football from professional coaches and players, plus cover conditioning, increasing performance and mental toughness while providing inspi-



Dungy

ration, playing with passion, and personal character development. It will challenge young players to avoid drugs, play clean and learn the benefits of hard work."

Among the featured guests: University of Southern California head coach Pete Carroll and, from the NFL, quarterbacks Peyton Manning and Jim Sorgi, Hall of Fame receiver Michael Irvin, 2007 Defensive Player of the Year Bob Sanders, place kicker Adam Vinatieri, running back Joseph Addai, and tight end Dallas Clark.

For his part, Dungy hopes the event helps young athletes know that "the most important thing is to become good husbands and fathers, and the most important thing for these young guys is to get the good news about the Gospel."